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## THE UNFORGIVEN.

Wat Shea was the son of a small farmer residing in one of the southern counties, and being a remarkably well behaved young man, and very attentive to the concerns of his father's farm, he was generally beloved by all that knew him; and considered of a character so worthy and inoffensive, that to have their sons seen in his company, was the ambition of every respectable farmer in the parish. Unfortunately, as it afterwards turned out, he was, like almost all men of his class in this country, passionately addicted to athletic exercises, and feats of personal strength, in which, from his great activity, he remained at last without a rival. He had enjoyed this pre-eminence with the concurrence of all his associates for a considerable time, when the arrival of a farmer from a neighbouring county, who took some ground in the district, raised up against him a formidable rival. This man had one son, who being a first-rate hand at such exercises, and unrivalled in the country from whence he came, began to nourish a strong feeling of jealous rivalry against Shea, as soon as he heard of his superiority in the sports of which he considered himself the master, and took every opportunity of letting it be seen by their mutual companions. This conduct soon had the invariable effect of giving rise to correspondent feelings in the breast of the man he sought to provoke; and Wat soon gave symptoms, whenever his rival was present, of possessing that latent spirit of uncontrollable fierceness which exists in such a remarkable degree in the nature of the Irish peasant, and is very often found strongest in men whose general conduct, when it is at rest, is most correct and irreproachable.

This jealousy, from small beginnings, soon assumed a character of fixed inveteracy. At first it only showed itself in disparaging remarks, made by both young men, whenever they heard each other's qualifications spoken of; but this state of negative hostility soon assumed a more open and active appearance; and they were frequently to be found struggling personally for the meed of conquest. It was not long till these contentions caused a split amongst the young men of the neighbourhood, some of whom had in secret nourished sentiments of enmity to Wat on account of his superior prowess, and were glad to gratify them by taking part with the stranger.—Various were the trials which took place between the two rivals, without any decisive results; however, the prize seemed generally to lean to the new comer, whose great size and strength certainly rendered him more than a match for his adversary. The consciousness of this inflamed Shea's anger the more, and at length he proposed that their rivalry should be brought to a fair test, by a general hurling match between the two factions.

On the day appointed for the grand struggle, the adherents of the rival leaders, Shea and Leary, assembled at the time specified; and a space having been marked out, the contest commenced with equal eagerness and bad feeling; both the rivals placing themselves so, that they should come in contact as often as possible. For a long time the fate of the game was doubtful, the two parties alternately enjoying the smiles of fortune; but at last Leary's faction began to have the best of it, being generally composed of the most active young men, who from being more nearly on an equality with Shea, were necessarily the first to join his antagonist. Irritated beyond measure at seeing his enemy on the point of winning the game, Wat used the most extraordinary endeavours to renew the hopes of his party, and such was the success that attended his efforts, that victory began to be doubtful. This momentary success aroused Leary to additional action. Enraged at seeing the game almost snatched from his hand by the prowess of a single man, he in turn redoubled his efforts, and for a time the chances of the game appeared in a great measure to depend on the action of the two leaders. Unfortunately at this moment they met in such close contact, that a bodily struggle became inevitable. Both were young, strong, and active, and stimulated by a ferocious emulation, they tugged for the fall for some time with equal success, until at length, the superior strength of Leary was near giving him the palm; when Shea, who was an expert wrestler, suddenly closed with his antagonist, seized him round the waist,

lifted him from his feet, and then dashed him to the ground with tremendous impetus, turning the butt-end of his hurly against the breast of his antagonist in the fall, and coming down on him with all his weight.—In a moment Shea jumped up light and active, but Leary stirred not—he lay for dead at the feet of his vanquisher. The butt of the hurly had done its work, or, as the bye standers expressed themselves, “his heart was bruck.”

It was then, when too late, that Wat Shea's better nature began to show itself. In an agony of grief he used every exertion to recover his inanimate rival, but in vain. At length the body was carried home, where plentiful bleeding, and the exertions of the village surgeon, in a short time restored animation to the sufferer. When he opened his eyes, the first face that met his view, of all those who leaned over his bed, was that of the now repentant Shea.

“Tim Leary, Tim Leary,” he exclaimed in deep grief, “forgive me for what I have done, I was savage an' didn't know what I was about.”

The vanquished man glared on his victor for a moment with an eye of inveterate hatred, and answered in a voice calm and composed—

“Wat Shea, it was done like a murderer—my blood be at your door—I'll never forgive you!”

At this moment the entry of the priest, who had been hastily sent for to attend the dying man, prevented further conversation, and compelled all in the room to withdraw; but as they only retired to the passage outside the door, it was easy for them to overhear any thing particular that might occur within. For a short time they could distinguish nothing above the usual low hum, which marks in such cases, the intercourse between the Roman Catholic priest, and those whom he is called to attend. However, shortly, the voice of the former became more loud, it appeared in earnestly entreating some particular favour from the wounded hurler, but without effect. After the lapse of a few minutes the door opened, and the confessor beckoned them in.

“My good people,” said he, as they entered, “come and assist me in urging this misguided young man from the present bent of his mind. He is about to die in the commission of a deadly sin—he refuses forgiveness to his enemies.”

They went over to the bed-side, the wounded Leary was evidently in his last moments, again his eye met that of the weeping Wat, and a dark shade settled on his brow.

“Wat Shea,” said he, in a broken tone; “my blood be upon your head. I'll never forgive you!”

A slight convulsion passed over his frame, his eye became fixed, his jaw fell—he was dead. Those who were present at that awful moment, long afterwards remembered the look of deadly inveteracy with which the dying hurler regarded his vanquisher.

“I'm afeard,” remarked old Leary, when speaking some time after on the subject, “I'm afeard the boy 'll have a dark end after it.”

Weeks passed away after the burial of the hurler, and time began, as usual, to blunt the grief which his family entertained for his loss. Even the remorse in which Shea indulged for some time after the fatal occurrence, was perceptibly yielding to its influence, and the soothing attention which his whole family vied in bestowing on him. But it made one remarkable change in his general conduct. From the day of the fatal conflict, he studiously shunned the society of his former associates, and gave up the exercises in which he before so much delighted. To the frequent remonstrances on his inactivity of those who had adopted him as a leader, he turned a deaf ear, and always met their solicitations with a calm but decided negative; always accompanying the refusal with a recommendation to them to give up such pursuits, as likely to “end in no good.” Wearied with his perseverance, they at length discontinued further persuasion, and went in pursuit of a more amenable comrade. Left to himself he turned his whole attention to the care of his father's property, and attended to it with such diligence, that the gratified parent thought himself too happy in the possession of such a son, and used often fondly to anticipate the comfort he would enjoy in declining age, from his steady-

ness and sobriety. In this state of uninterrupted tranquillity the Sheas remained during the summer: but the catastrophe was approaching, so well foreseen by the father of Leary.

It happened late one night in harvest time, when the family were as usual collected round the kitchen fire, that Wat suddenly recollected having left open a gate leading from the fields where the cows were pastured, into a large tract of unreaped corn. Fear lest they should get in and trample down the crop, made him start up, and signify his determination to go immediately and close it. Some indefinable presentiment of evil had been hanging over the mother during the whole day. She earnestly conjured him to forego his intention, telling him at the same time of the fears that oppressed her. The superstition of the Irish peasantry is well known. At first her words made a strong impression on her son, and his face whitened perceptibly at her earnestness of action; but speedily recovering himself, he called to mind the (to them) serious loss which would accrue, was the herd to be left ranging the corn during the entire night, and endeavoured to impress the consequences on her, but in vain; she still remained inexorable, and refused to agree to his going out. At length, the anxious father, who was also fully alive to the loss which he might sustain if the young man's apprehension should prove true, advanced from the arm-chair which he occupied at the fire-side, and signified his determination to end the dispute by going himself. This movement at once decided the controversy, and Cauth Shea agreed to her son's departure without further opposition, being well aware that, when the deed was to be done, Wat was the fittest messenger; as age and its accompanying infirmities, were already fast rendering her husband unfit for active exercise. She accordingly attended him to the door, and dismissed him with a trembling prayer for his safety.

As soon as Wat had departed, his sisters endeavoured, by renewing the conversation, to draw away their mother's attention from the fears which alarmed her, but their endeavours were without success. Still she listened in breathless terror to the sigh of the night breeze as it fitfully moaned by the cabin, as if she thought its voice was about to herald the approach of misfortune. At length, when sufficient time had elapsed to allow of her son's return, without his having made his appearance, her fears began to be shared by the rest of her family, and every ear was anxiously bent to catch the first sounds of his approach, but still no step rewarded their watchfulness. Half an hour more passed in this silent and sorrowful suspense, without the wished for sound saluting their ears. It was then that poor Cauth Shea, thinking her worst fears realized, burst into a passionate fit of lamentation, and paced the floor of her humble kitchen, wringing her hands in the most intense grief. Her husband more surprised than alarmed at Wat's stay, affectionately demanded why she troubled herself so much at a very natural occurrence; reminding her of the peaceful state of the country, the shortness of the distance he had to go, and the little likelihood there was of any accident happening to him on the way. To all this she only answered,

"Oh! Tim Leary's last words—they are always afore me, since ever I hard them tould."

Another half hour having elapsed without tidings of the absent Wat, the old man became himself greatly alarmed, and set out, despite of every remonstrance, to explore the way, and make out the cause of his delay. In about twenty minutes he returned in a dreadful state of agitation, bearing in his hand the straw hat of his son, which he found in the field where the cattle were grazing; nothing further, however, he had learned of him, notwithstanding all his search. But though so much alarmed himself, he strove to comfort the listeners with the hope, that the young man had met with some friends on the way, who had carried him off to a wake which was holding at some distance. Whilst the rest of the family were consoling themselves with this conclusion, the mother remained uncomfortable.

In this state of uncertainty they remained for an hour longer, when suddenly the approach of footsteps gave new life to all; but their joy was of short duration, for on a nearer approach the tread appeared far too slow and too

heavy to belong to the light and active Wat. They looked at each other as the noise approached, and a strange mixture of fear and doubt prevented any movement, until a heavy push at the door, as if the stranger had thrown himself against it, accompanied by a deep groan, roused the unhappy mother to action, and she hastily arose from the settle on which she was sitting, and undid the latch. The moment the door was opened, a man rushed in, gave a loud cry, and fell senseless near the fire—it was Wat Shea!

It would be needless to relate all the measures taken by the agonized mother, assisted by the rest of the family, to restore animation to the lifeless body of her son. Let it suffice, that he was hastily borne to bed, where, in the course of a short time, their endeavours were crowned with success. On first opening his eyes the patient gave a deep groan and,

"Tim Leary, Tim Leary!" he exclaimed with a convulsive start of horror, "you've had your revenge at last." Then perceiving his mother, who watched over him with breathless solicitude, he concluded, "mother, send for the priest—I'm dying." He was a corpse before morning.

The relation which he gave was wild and strange to a degree. When arrived at the field, he stated he proceeded towards the gate which he had left open, but had got only a short distance, when his progress was arrested by the appearance of some moving object fixed right in his path. On approaching it he perceived a large white dog facing him, as if ready to oppose his further advance. A sudden terror came over him, he continued, such as he had never known before, and he drew back a few steps; but still as he retreated his pursuer advanced with equal pace, increasing, it appeared, in size at every step. Terrified at the apparition, he ran with the utmost speed towards the nearest ditch, and had nearly reached it, when, on looking back, he perceived the object of his alarm, now increased to an immense size, close at his back, with its fore-paws just descending on his shoulders, as if to bear him down, each eye of the gigantic phantom red as a flaming torch. In that moment, as he was hurled with tremendous violence to the earth, he declared that he distinctly heard the following words—"Wat. Shea, I told you that I'd never forgive you."

More he could not relate, save that, on reviving, he found himself deprived of all strength, and for a long time scarcely able to move a limb, like one after receiving a dreadful beating. In such a state he had reached his house, as already related. The most surprising feature of the story was, that his body exhibited no marks of outward violence whatever.

The circumstances detailed in the foregoing narrative, singular as they may appear, are corroborated by the concurrent testimony of the whole family of the unhappy man whose fate it details, as well as of many others cognizant of every circumstance in the extraordinary recital.

#### STORY OF THE DUKE DE ALVA.

It was on a December evening, when the winds and waters seemed striving which should make the most fearful ravages, that the inhabitants of the little village of Melinda, in the bay of Lago, were alarmed by a signal of distress at sea. The night being an awful one—the waves fearfully bounded to the blast, and the vivid lightnings playing over their undulated surface, discovered a ship driven by the strong lee-wind towards the shore. In vain the landmen, who had been drawn together by the signal of distress, shouted to steer her between two enormous masses of rock, in which course was her only chance of safety, for the dashing of the water drowned the loudest voice; even had the helmsman heard it, the thing were impracticable, as immediately after a huge wave struck the vessel on her beams and unshipped her rudder, and in a few moments she struck on the reef at the east side of the bay, and went to pieces. After a fruitless watch of several hours, to assist any who might have been able to reach the shore, the villagers retired to their respective habitations, with the melancholy feeling that not only the vessel but all on board were lost.

In this ship was the young Duke de Alva, who, as his father had been some time dead, not only inherited his